

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00083 142059Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0083

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CA, US, PFOR
SUBJECT: DR STRANGELOVE GOES TO CHARM SCHOOL

1. QUEBEC'S MINISTER FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE LEGISLATIVE GODFATHER OF CONTROVERSIAL LANGUAGE ACT, DR CAMILLE LAURIN, ON MARCH 11 WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO DEMONSTRATE TOLERANCE AND FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS AMERICANS. SEIZING OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY RECEPTION AT MY RESIDENCE CELEBRATING VICTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS STATE LEGISLATURE'S HOCKEY TEAM OVER THEIR QUEBEC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COUNTERPARTS (8-2), DR LAURIN APPEARED WITH HIS WIFE AND COMPORTED HIMSELF IN MOST UNCHARACTERISTICLY JOCLULAR AND INFORMAL FASHION.

2. WEARING AN ALMOST BENIGN GRIN, HE TOOK ME ASIDE TO ASK WHAT I THOUGHT OF MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, CLAUDE MORIN'S "FOREIGN POLICY" SPEECH DELIVERED EARLIER THIS WEEK? (SEE QUEBEC 74) IN MOST POSITIVE BUT NON-COMMITTAL FASHION I COULD MUSTER, I TOLD HIM IT HAD BEEN "REASSURING." HE THEN TOLD ME THAT MORIN'S UNDERTAKING TO REMAIN IN NATO AND NORAD REPRESENTS VIEWS OF CABINET. IN FACT, HE SAID, "WE ARE DETERMINED TO CHANGE NOTHING (HE EMPHASIZED NOTHING)
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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00083 142059Z

IN PRESENT CANADIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH US SHOULD WE EVER (HE EMPHASIZED EVER) BECOME INDEPENDENT."

3. WE ARE NOT RADICALS, HE SAID. THE PQ IS NOT SOCIALIST PARTY AND WE DO NOT INTEND NATIONALIZE INDUSTRY. ON CONTRARY, VAST MAJORITY IN GOQ AND IN PQ ARE DEDICATED TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND TO NORTH AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. IT IS TOO BAD WE HAVE

GAINED RADICAL IMAGE IN US PRESS. THIS IS DISTORTION, HE ASSERTED, WHICH HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY HOSTILE ANGLOPHONE PRESU IN MONTREAL AND ELSEWHERE IN CANADA.

4. "AMERICANS ARE OUR FAVORITE FOREIGNERS." WE FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THEM THAN WITH ANY OTMER NON-QUEBECOIS, INCLUDING FRENCH. WE ARE NORTH AMERICANS WHO HAPPEN SPEAK FRENCH, SAID THE GOOD DOCTOR. IN FACT, WE ADOPTED NAME "QUEBECOIS" A FEW YEARS AGO AS MUCH TO AVOID BEING CALLED FRENCH AS TO BEING CALLED CANADIAN.

5. NEXT JULY 3, GOQ IS PLANNING NATIONAL FETE TO EMPHASIZE OUR 300 YEAR EXISTENCE AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE. AT THAT TIME, DR. LAURIN SAID, WE ARE PLANNING INVITE "OUR COUSINS" WHOSE ANCESTORS MIGRATED TO US AND TO OTHER PARTS OF CANADA "TO COME HOME." IT WILL ALSO BE INVITATION TO LOST SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF QUEBEC WHO HAVE GONE INTO DIASPORA TO RETURN TO FIND THEIR "ROOTS". AS DR LAURIN DESCRIBED IT, CELEBRATION SPECIALLY AIMED AT HONORING GLORIOUS HISTORY OF FRENCH-CANADIAN EXPLORERS AND TRADERS WHO FIRST OPNED UP AMERICAN WEST.

6. COMMENT: DR LAURIN SPARED NO EFFORT TO PROJECT A FRIENDLY AND TOLERATE IMPRESSION. EVIDENTLY, HE HAS BECOME SENSITIZED TO THE IMAGE HE HAS ACQUIRED AS QUEBEC'S LEADING LANGUAGE BIGOT ZITH STRONG ANTI-BUSINESS PREJUDICES. NO ONE THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 QUEBEC 00083 142059Z

KNOWS HIM WELL HAS EVER SERIOUSLY ACCUSED HIM OF BEING A RADICAL IN A SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SENSE. RATHER, HE MIGHT MORE ACCURATELY BE DESCRIBED AS AN OLD-FASHIONED NATIONALIST FANATIC WITH SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGICAL VIEWS. IN LIGHT OF EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER OF TOURISM DUHAIME ON MORIN SPEECH (QUEBEC 74). LAURIN'S INSISTENCE THAT SPEECH REFLECT CABINET VIEW IS ESPECIALLY INTERESTING. PERHAPS HE WAS AWARE OF DUHAIME'S HONEST BUT IMPOLITIC REMARKS AND WAS ATTEMPTING AGAIN REASSURE US OF GOQ'S SOLID SUPPORT FOR NORAD AND NATO PARTICIPATION. WHATEVER HIS REASONS, IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT AMONG THOSE IN PQ BOTHERED BY PACIFIST RESERVATIONS. MCNAMARA

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